

Garuda Puran

Background

Garuda Puran is a dialogue between Lord Vishnu and Garuda narrated by sage Suta. It comprises of sixteen chapters as under:

- Chapter 1: Miseries of the Sinners in this World and Hereafter
- Chapter 2: Description of Way to Yama
- Chapter 3: Torments of Yama
- Chapter 4: Description of Sins that lead to Hell
- Chapter 5: Description of Signs of Sins and Classes of Rebirth after Term in Hell
- Chapter 6: Description of Miseries of the Birth of the Sinful
- Chapter 7: Description of the Sacrament for the Dead
- Chapter 8: Description of the Gifts for the Dying
- Chapter 9: Description of the Rites for the Dying
- Chapter 10: Description of collecting Bones from the Fire and other Rites
- Chapter 11: Description of 10-days Ceremonies
- Chapter 12: Description of the 11th Day Rite
- Chapter 13: Description of Ceremonies for Ancestors
- Chapter 14: Description of City of Lord of Justice (Dharamraja) – Impenetrable by gods and demons.
- Chapter 15: Description of Rebirth after Term in Heaven; Parts of Body; Nerves, Artery, Ducts, Veins; *Pranas*; Cosmos within Body; Six *Chakras* and Seed Sounds of Language (16 vowels and 36 consonants); Stillness of Mind and Yoga under the guidance of a Realized Teacher.
- Chapter 16: Description of the Law of Liberation

Garuda Puran is used at funeral ceremonies and due to fear and ignorance; people do not keep it in the house. Chapters 15 and 16 are the most wonderful part of this Puran and we deprive ourselves of the knowledge contained therein by not reading it.

Chapter 15

Description of Rebirth after Term in Heaven

(Begetting Virtuous Child, Parts of Body, Customary and Spiritual Body
Six *Chakras* and Seed Sounds of Language, Stillness of Mind and Yoga)

Begetting Virtuous Child (Part 1)

Garuda said:

- The righteous men having enjoyed term in heaven are born in a stainless family. Now tell me how he is produced in the womb of the mother.
- I wish to hear what the pious man of virtuous actions thinks while in womb.

The Blessed Lord said:

- **Garuda. You have asked a good question.** I will tell you that supreme secret, even by knowing which one acquires eligibility of omniscience (all-knowing, all-wise).
- **I will tell you the spiritual nature of the body which possesses the attributes of the universal Egg, – the object of concentration of Yogins.** Hear how the Yogins reflect upon the six *chakras** within and likewise contemplate upon the nature of the Supreme Being in the Brahmarandhra.

[* Six chakras are the operative centers of the body. Life force enters the physical body through 2-petal lotus at the eye centre and it controls the activity of five lower chakras. Life force in the physical body is diffused in five *pranic* currents which interact with five *tattvas* (subtle creative elements) viz. Ether at 16-petal lotus at Throat *chakra*, Air at 12-petal lotus at Heart *chakra*, Fire at 8-petal lotus at Navel *chakra*, Water at 6-petal lotus at Genital *chakra* and Earth at 4-petal lotus at Rectal *chakra*.

The interaction of *pranas* and subtle *tattvas* create an etheric 'web' which is also called etheric body. It carries the organizational blueprint of the physical body. Life force which is electro-magnetic in nature flows down from the eye centre and this downward flow is caused by the whirling movement of *chakras*. From eye centre to Throat, Heart, Navel, Genital, and Rectal performing inner activities of the body and finally it flows out to the physical universe through attention.

The chakras are positioned within spinal column and are subtle energy fields. The six physical *chakras* are reflections of corresponding six centers in the astral body, which are themselves a reflection of six centers in the causal and pure spiritual regions. The physical universe experienced by us is therefore a reflection of a reflection. By contemplative meditation Yogins reverse the whirling of these *chakras* by withdrawing attention from the physical universe and are able to experience the subtle creation in astral and higher regions depending upon the realization status of the Teacher.]

- How a pious of virtuous actions is born in the house of the pure and prosperous, I will tell you also about the disposition and religious observance of the parents.
- **When the menses commence, the woman should be avoided for four days. Her face should not be seen*** during that time, lest sin should arise in the body.

[*Not seeing the face implies that man should not pay attention to physical assets of woman so as to avoid lustful thoughts that may lead to copulation during prohibited four days.]

- Having bathed, and washed her clothes, a woman becomes pure on the fourth day. From the seventh day she becomes fit to perform the rites of worship to the forefathers and the Shining Ones.
- **During the seven days the embryo continues impure and leads to the birth of sinful. Here the sons gradually enter during the eighth day.**
- **Sons are born on even nights, daughters on odd. Keeping away from her during the first seven days, he should try copulation on even days to beget a son (and on odd days to beget a daughter).**
- From commencement of menstruation, commonly sixteen nights are declared to be period of menses for women for conceiving a child. (Sixteen are favourable, but the fourteenth of them is best, if some other cause does not render it inauspicious). **On the fourteenth night the seed remains there certainly.**
- **Righteous man who copulates on fourteenth night is blessed with the righteous son, a store of auspicious qualities. That night is never obtained by unrefined, uncultivated (normal) people.**
- On the fifth day women should eat sweet foods. Pungent, acidic, astringent and hot things should be entirely avoided. **The seed from the husband is like nectar and to beget a righteous child, it should be carefully preserved in the womb free from the effects of bitter, brackish, pungent and hot food.**
- The husband, like a husbandman, having sown the seed of great potentiality in the field which is productive of grain, reaps a good harvest.
- The man, having chewed betel (to augment the virile power), put on flowers and sandal-paste, and clean clothes, and with righteous thoughts in his mind, should unite with his good wife.
- **According to the thoughts in his mind at the time of union will be the nature of the one who enters the womb.**
- **The supreme soul as consciousness, intelligence in seed form remains always established in the sperm. When passionate attention and semen are absorbed in each other, then the man obtains semen, and it is discharged in the womb of the woman.**
- **With the union of semen and blood in the interior of the womb the formation of body takes place.**

- **The virtuous son who enters the womb is the giver of the highest bliss. For him there are numerous rites, such as the Pumsavana*.**

[*Pumsavana is performed in the third or fourth month of pregnancy when the moon is in a male constellation, particularly the Tishyanakshatra. This symbolizes a male child. Therefore the term Pumsavana literally means 'male procreation!']

- **The meritorious soul obtains birth in a high family. At the time of his birth Brahmins* receive much wealth.**

[*According to Vajrasuchi-Upanishad, who is a Brahmin? **One who has directly realised his Ātma** and who is directly cognizant, like the berry in his palm, of his Ātma that is without a second, that is devoid of class and actions, **that is free from the faults of the six stains** (hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, old age, and death) **and the six changes** (birth, existence, growth, transformation, decrease, and annihilation), **that is of the nature of truth, knowledge, bliss, and eternity**, that is without any change in itself, that is the substratum of all the kalpas, that exists penetrating all things that pervades everything within and without as ākāś, **that is of nature of undivided bliss, that cannot be reasoned about and that is known only by direct cognition.**

He who by the reason of having obtained his wishes **is devoid of the faults of thirst after worldly objects and passions**, who is the possessor of the qualifications beginning with śama (sama, dama, uparaṭi, ṭīṭkshā, samādhāna, and sraddhā), **who is free from emotion, malice, thirst after worldly objects, desire, delusion, etc., whose mind is untouched by pride, egoism, etc., who possesses all these qualities and means -- he only is the brāhmaṇa.**]

- He grows up in his parents' house, endowed with learning and modesty, becoming skilful in all the sciences, by association with the wise.
- In his youth he is divinely handsome, wealthy and benevolent, arising as the result of great merit, austerities, and pilgrimages formerly done and he marries a brilliant, charming, and virtuous woman.
- Then he constantly strives to discriminate between the self and the not-self by false accusation and aspersion, two sorts of arguments, he meditates upon Brahman.
- For the understanding of the dissociation of Brahman from that with which he is associated, I will tell you the attributes of earth etc. i.e. lifeless and soulless five elements.